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GEORGE

A SKETCH

by
H. K. GORMALL

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GEORGE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

TIMOTHY TREUWICK	<i>An old "salt."</i>
MARTHA TREUWICK	<i>His third wife.</i>
GEORGE	<i>Son to Timothy, a sailor.</i>
DORCAS	<i>Daughter to Timothy.</i>
CORPORAL BILL HAWKE	<i>Courting Dorcas.</i>
JOSIAH COBLEY	<i>George's grandfather.</i>

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GEORGE.

SCENE.—*Treuwick's kitchen. Doors R., L. and centre.*

TIME.—*Evening.*

(When curtain goes up TIMOTHY is seen seated before the fire smoking a churchwarden. MARTHA opposite knitting.)

TIMOTHY. Well, mother, what about me 'aving a pint of ale to-night seeing how as it's Alf's birthday?

MARTHA. Oh, Alf's birthday, is it? 'Tis more birthdays you can remember than sons, seems to me.

TIMOTHY. Alf's birthday be the twelfth anyway, and it ain't right he should be forgotten, him being far away across seas.

MARTHA. Well, yesterday were the twelfth, so you be a day late, Timothy.

TIMOTHY. It be due to him, all the same.

MARTHA *(giving way)*. Oh, well, if it ain't one thing, it's another. If it ain't Alf, it's Percy or 'Erbert or Jack or Enoch or one of they others.

(Takes money out of a tea-pot and goes off with jug.)

(TIMOTHY gets a glass. Enter DORCAS from c.)

DORCAS. Where's 'er gone, dad?

(TIMOTHY does not answer.)

I'm speaking to you, dad. . . . Where be 'er gone?

(No answer.)

Where's mother gone to?

TIMOTHY. Aye, aye, lass—now you be speaking respectful-like. 'Er's my third wife and your third mother. So don't you forget your dooty to your parents what you learnt in your commandments at Sunday School.

DORCAS. All right, dad. Be mother gone to the village?

TIMOTHY. 'Er's gone to the inn to get your old dad a pint of ale, seeing as how it be Alf's birthday.

DORCAS. Alf's birthday! It were Enoch's birthday the day before yesterday if that's what you be thinking of.

TIMOTHY. Aye, aye, lass; 'twas Enoch I meant. 'Tain't right he should be forgot him being away to China.

DORCAS. 'Twas from Aberdeen Enoch wrote last week. 'E be in the North Sea along of Bob and Jack and Alfred.

TIMOTHY. Aye, aye, lass; and so he be. You be quite correct. Don't you like your third mother?

DORCAS. 'Er's all right, dad; but she and me's strange like as yet. . . . The Treuwicks is a marrying family, isn't they, dad?

TIMOTHY. Aye, happen they be.

DORCAS. 'Tis a wonder though you married chapel, seeing how you be churchwarden and strong for the church.

TIMOTHY. Her father was a good sailor man, and so was her late 'usband—a man what I respected. 'Tweren't right such a decent sort of woman should be left stranded when here was your old dad a bachelor once more.

DORCAS. Aye, 'tis a marrying family we are. . . . Dad, Bill Hawke's asked me again.

(TIMOTHY makes no answer.)

Dad, Bill Hawke's asked me again, and it ain't fair he shouldn't have his answer.

TIMOTHY. And his answer is—No. What, a lass

of mine go for marrying a soldier when there's lots of fine upstanding sailor men about ! Never !

DORCAS. Ah, but you ain't seen Bill, dad. He's a corporal and stands up fine and handsome, he does. Do 'ee let him come and see you.

TIMOTHY. Just let him show his nose in here, and I'll . . . I'll . . . I'll twist it for him, churchwarden or no churchwarden.

DORCAS. You're cruel hard, Dad.

TIMOTHY. I've no opinion of soldiers. They're not hearty like sailor men. And 'tis no religion they have in them.

DORCAS. A soldier's as good as a sailor any day.

TIMOTHY. He is not—and that's gospel truth.

DORCAS. For the last time, dad, I asks you—May I marry Bill Hawke ?

TIMOTHY. For the last time—No !

DORCAS. But you've not never seen him, dad. Do 'ee let him call on me—do 'ee.

TIMOTHY. There's your mother. Just open the door for her.

(Enter MARTHA.)

MARTHA. There's a gale blowing up from Sou'-west. *(Pours out beer.)*

TIMOTHY. There, there—that's good sailor talk that is. A Sou'-wester, eh ? . . . Well, here's to Alf, what's away by China . . .

DORCAS. He mean Enoch, mother.

TIMOTHY. 'Ere's to Alf. Good luck to you, lad.

. . . .

(Exit DORCAS by R.)

Now where be she going to ?

MARTHA. 'Er's going to play the 'armonium up at the church ; but 'er's fretting for that lad of 'ers, Timothy.

TIMOTHY. Now, mother, is it right or proper, that a Treuwick what's got the salt sea in their veins

should go for to marry a landlubber soldier? What 'ud Alf or Peter or 'Erbert say?

MARTHA. But 'tis not all your boys follow the sea.

TIMOTHY. I say—what would 'Erbert what's bo'sun aboard His Majesty's ship the *Billy Ruffian* say if our Dorcas were to marry a chap what's all pipe-clay and buttons?

MARTHA. Is it ten or twelve lads thou has, Timothy?

TIMOTHY. I misremember. 'Tis a many lads I have, and all fine upstanding sailor men. . . . Let me see—there's Alf and Peter and 'Erbert and Jack and Percy what's in the Navy—and Sid and Enoch what's in the Merchant Service and Bob and Fred and—but blow me tight I can't keep tally on them. But there's twelve on 'em, all fine upstanding sailor men.

MARTHA. But isn't one of them a policeman up at Exeter, and another driving a bus up at Lunnon?

TIMOTHY (*firmly*). And all on 'em fine upstanding sailor men, Martha.

MARTHA. 'Tis lonesome for the lass now that the boys be grown up and 'er the only one left at home.

TIMOTHY. But don't they keep popping in to see 'er? Why, there's that a many lads keeps dropping in here and a-calling me "Dad" that it seems to me I've got more sons to my name than ever I've owned to. The lass has plenty company.

MARTHA. Aye, but she be fair wrapt up in that Bill Hawke what folk say is a fine brave lad, though I ain't set eyes on him myself.

TIMOTHY. I'll Bill Hawke him if he comes round here courting. I'll pull his nose for him, that I will—churchwarden or no churchwarden.

(Here enter from R. a sailor, dumps a bag and hangs his hat up without saying a word. The old people watch him in silent curiosity.)

Well, and who be you?

GEORGE. I'm George—son George. And I hears you're married again, dad. You allus was one for the girls. . . . How do, mother. (*Kisses her.*)

TIMOTHY. Here, 'old 'ard! Not so much familiarity. . . . George—George. Here, Martha, did I say as I had a son George?

MARTHA. Tha' didn't, Timothy; but 'twasn't all of them tha' remembered. 'E must wipe 'is feet though.

TIMOTHY. Now look 'ee here, boy. There's lads keep dropping in here continual and calling of me dad. . . . Well, all's fair and square up to the round dozen, but when it comes to fifteen and eighteen 'tis a reflection on my moral character what as churchwarden of St. Deiniel's I'm not going to stand for . . . George—I ain't got no son George.

GEORGE. Come now, dad. Surely you remember George—next after Alfred and eighteen months ahead of Frank.

TIMOTHY. I got no son George and that's gospel truth.

GEORGE. 'Course you've got a son George. Don't you mind laying on to me with a strap for bricking up the top of parson's chimney and smoking him black?

TIMOTHY. Now, now—that were Alf that were and well I walloped him, the young rascal. I never 'ad no George.

GEORGE. Well, I'm writ down plain in the Family Bible and many a times I've seen it. . . . Just you have a look.

TIMOTHY. That's fair and square, that is? Mother, get out the old log book.

(*MARTHA gets Bible. TIMOTHY puts on spectacles.*)

GEORGE. Now ain't I right?

TIMOTHY (*triumphantly*). Wrong, my boy, wrong. There was a George but he died. Here you are: "George—born November the first, 1890. Died in

infancy. Cause—measles." . . . So there, my boy.

GEORGE. Oh, but there was two of us. I were the second George. I come next after Alfred.

TIMOTHY. Um. Alfred. Here's Alfred and here—why to be sure, there was a George . . . And so you're the lad, are you?

GEORGE. The very same.

MARTHA. 'E ain't wiped 'is feet yet.

TIMOTHY. And a fine upstanding sailor man you be. I like the cut of your jib. . . . How are you, George? (*Shakes his hand.*) 'Ave some beer?

GEORGE. Thank 'ee, dad. I don't mind if I do. (*Gets up and wipes feet on mat.*)

TIMOTHY. Mother, 'ere's our George come home. You be running along and getting another pint of four 'alf.

MARTHA. Oh, well, if it ain't one thing, 'tis another. 'Twas Alfred, and now 'tis George.

(*Takes jug and money. Exit by R.*)

TIMOTHY. She's a handy women, but close. . . . You'll call her "Ma," won't you?

GEORGE. I'll call her anything, dad—anything that is, what'll oblige you. . . . But where's Dorcas?

TIMOTHY. Dorcas. Oh, she's gone to the church to play the 'armonium—but 'er's chapel.

GEORGE. Chapel. Why, dad, I thought you was against chapel. Chapel and church won't mix no more than oil and water you used to say.

TIMOTHY. Well, well—'er late 'usband was a sailor man and a man what I respected and I kinder promised 'im as how I'd take his derelict in tow. . . . Are you married yourself, George?

GEORGE. No; but I'm walking out wi' a girl. And a fine lass she is. But worst of it is, her father—what's a sergeant-major—don't hold with sailors.

TIMOTHY. What! Just you say that again.

GEORGE. I say he don't hold with sailors. He says they're not hearty.

TIMOTHY. What! Sailor men not hearty!

GEORGE. And that they've got no religion in them.

TIMOTHY. Sailors got no religion in them! Blast his eyes. Just let me get at him and I'll—I'll—I'll pull his nose for him. . . . You go ahead courting, George. Marry the girl. Don't you be put off by any blooming sergeant-major.

GEORGE. Aye, I mean to.

TIMOTHY. And just tell him your dad's a churchwarden and very well respected. That'll settle him.

(Enter MRS. TREUWICK.)

GEORGE. All right, dad.

MARTHA. As I say, if it isn't one thing, depend upon it's another. 'Ere you are. (Sets jug on table.)

TIMOTHY. George, I like the cut of your jib. You do me credit. 'Ow long are you staying?

GEORGE. Oh, just a night or so, if you can find me a bunk.

TIMOTHY. Oh, aye, we can do that well enough, can't us, mother? . . . And I say, George, whenever you land in these parts, just you drop in. You're a chip of the old block, though I can't say as I remembers your features o'er well.

GEORGE. I take after mother.

TIMOTHY. Happen that's it. 'Ave some beer. (Pours it out.)

GEORGE. Thank you, dad.

MARTHA. You don't object to a featherbed, do you, Mr. George?

GEORGE. Not me.

MARTHA. 'Tis the one my poor dear late 'usband died on. But he won't be troubling you. He'd got religion. Maybe you're saved yourself.

GEORGE. Saved. Yes, I've got a tidy bit put by, meaning to get married some day.

TIMOTHY. You go ahead, George, and marry the girl. And damn that sergeant-major.

MARTHA. I didn't say "Have you saved?" but "Are you saved?"

TIMOTHY. Now, now, mother. We's Church of England. I don't 'old with being saved.

GEORGE. No more do I. But (*here he stands up and salutes*) I obeys orders and salutes my superior officer.

TIMOTHY. A right proper speech and a proper religion too.

MARTHA. Ah, well, if it isn't one thing, it's another. . . . But 'tis mighty comforting all the same.

(*Enter DORCAS.*)

GEORGE (*jumping up and kissing her*). And how are you, Dorcas, lass?

TIMOTHY. 'Old 'ard, 'od 'ard! Not so much familiarity. You're a bit bold, young man.

GEORGE. But 'tis my own sister.

TIMOTHY. So you say. . . . He says as 'e's my son George. Do you remember him, Dorcas, lass?

DORCAS. Why of course, I remember him. (*Kisses him.*) Why, I am pleased to see you. 'Ave you got your leave?

GEORGE. Yes, I've got my leave. (*Sits down and pulls DORCAS down on to his knee.*)

TIMOTHY. 'Ere, 'old 'ard. Not so much familiarity. Are you sure 'e's your brother George?

DORCAS. I knew him directly I set eyes on him, dad.

TIMOTHY. Well, 'e's a fine upstanding lad and does me credit. 'Ave some more beer, George?

GEORGE. Don't mind if I do.

TIMOTHY. Mother, would you mind just running across the fetching another pint?

MARTHA. Not another pint you'll get to-night—none of you.

TIMOTHY. Well, what about 'alf a pint ?

MARTHA. Not one drop what I'll buy you. You've had more than's good for you. So don't let's 'ave no more talk.

TIMOTHY. Well, George, I like the cut of your jib. 'Tis pity you are my son George or you could have 'ad her. She's wanting a 'usband.

GEORGE (*putting his arm round DORCAS and hugging her*). Then I'd be doing this (*squeeze*) and this (*kiss*) wouldn't I, dad ?

TIMOTHY. Ah, I see you've had plenty of practice.

GEORGE. I have that. (*Repeats it.*)

(*Enter another sailor, dumps bag, hangs up hat and sits down.* DORCAS *jumps off* GEORGE'S *knee.*)

TIMOTHY. And who be you ? Now don't you be after calling me "Dad" because I won't 'ave it. I'll let you to know as I'm the churchwarden of this parish and as I won't stand for it. 'Tis scandalous !

GEORGE 2. But of course you're my dad. Don't you know me ?

TIMOTHY. I do not. Who be you ?

GEORGE 2. I'm your son George. I got a bit of leave, so I just hopped up to see you.

TIMOTHY. George—you George. Get along with you. You died in infancy wi' the measles.

GEORGE 2. Me dead. Not 'arf. . . . And is this your new missus ? I've been hearing of her . . . How are you, mother ? (*Kisses her.*) And sister Dorcas. (*Makes to kiss her.*)

TIMOTHY. 'Ere, 'old 'ard, young man ! Just you stop that. . . . This 'ere's my lad George. Just come 'ome 'e 'as and that's gospel.

GEORGE 2. George. Him Gorge. Why . . . what does he mean by coming here and saying he's George ?

MARTHA. Well, whoever *you* be, young man, you ain't wiped your boots.

TIMOTHY. Well, Dorcas shall settle the point.

Stands to reason I can't be "Dad" to both of you unless happen you're twins which ain't writ down in the book. . . . Now, Dorcas, lass; which of these two sailor men be our George?

DORCAS (*indicating GEORGE 1.*). This 'ere's my choice.

(*At the same time, DORCAS signals to GEORGE 2 to keep silent. GEORGE 1 squeezes her hand.*)

TIMOTHY. There you are. So now hop it, my lad. I'm not going to be called "Dad" by every stray sailor man that don't know his rightful way home. Hop it!

GEORGE 2. That there fellow 'er brother. Why . . .

(*DORCAS signals silence.*)

TIMOTHY. Hop it! Outside with you, bag and baggage—coming here and saying you was George when George hisself's a-setting here.

GEORGE 2. Him George Treuwick! Then who the blazes be I? Ain't I been sailing under that name these ten years!

MARTHA. Well, George or no George, let 'im wipe 'is boots.

TIMOTHY. I don't know who you be, but I ain't going to 'ave my character took away, me being churchwarden too. You 'op along.

GEORGE 2. (*squaring up and hitting an imaginary foe*). Well, I'll be waiting for 'im outside and I'll knock George out of 'im. He'll be weary William before I've finished with him.

GEORGE 1. Garn with your talk!

(*Exit GEORGE 2. DORCAS sees him out.*)

TIMOTHY. 'Ave some more beer, George. . . . Ah, but there ain't any, worse the luck! Ever see that bloke before?

GEORGE. I! No, I did not.

TIMOTHY. Well, you're the lad for me. I like the cut of your jib. 'Tis pity you're a son of mine or you could have married our Dorcas.

(DORCAS and GEORGE I exchange looks.)

Well, I think as 'ow I'll go up aloft. Good night to you, George. Mother, you'll show 'im where to sling his hammock. (*Goes to c. door.*)

MARTHA. Yes, when he's wiped them boots.

(DORCAS pushes GEORGE I forward.)

TIMOTHY. Oh, he'll do that. Wipe the boots, lad, afore tha comes up.

GEORGE. But wait a minute, Mr. Treuwick, sir.

TIMOTHY. What's that—what's that? You mistering me, and a-calling of me "sir"?

GEORGE I. I ain't George.

TIMOTHY. What, you ain't George. By the Lord Harry but . . .

GEORGE I. I'm Bill Hawke.

TIMOTHY (*coming back into the room*). Bill Hawke!

GEORGE I. Aye, Corporal Bill Hawke, and some day—as I hopes—sergeant Hawke.

TIMOTHY. Then you've told me a lot of lies, lad.

GEORGE I. Well, no more than I could 'elp, Mr. Treuwick. I just wanted to introduce myself to you, seeing how I was courting your daughter—that's all.

TIMOTHY. A pack of lies. 'Tain't what I stand for seeing as 'ow I'm a churchwarden.

GEORGE I. Well, I hope God Almighty will forgive me them same. 'Twere that wishful I was to be known to you.

TIMOTHY. Well, that's a proper speech, that is . . . I said I liked the cut of your jib, didn't I?

DORCAS. You sure did, dad.

TIMOTHY. And I said as happen you weren't my lad, you sould 'ave 'er.

GEORGE I. Them was your very words, Mr. Treuwick.

DORCAS. They were so, dad, and if church can marry chapel, why not army and navy?

TIMOTHY. You can 'ave 'er, Bill, and God bless you.

(The couple embrace.)

MARTHA. And now, Mister Hawke, perhaps you'll wipe your boots.

(BILL complies.)

TIMOTHY. But, by the Lord Harry, who was that lad I just marched out at the door?

DORCAS. That was brother George. You must ask his pardon, Bill.

TIMOTHY. Eh. So that were the real George. . . Well, well, and if this isn't a fair mix up.

(Loud knocking on door on R.)

(DORCAS opens door and GEORGE appears pushing an aged bent-up old man, JOSIAH COBLEY, hobbling on sticks.)

GEORGE. Now speak for me, granddad. Pull thyself together and speak for me.

TIMOTHY. What—Granddad. Now did you ever.

JOSIAH COBLEY *(to TIMOTHY)*. Aye, aye. He's treated me cruel, he has. Me what ain't walked these fifteen years, I be that old and poorly.

GEORGE. Aye, and 'e 'opped along like a young 'un, 'e did. Now, speak up, granddad, and say as 'ow I'm your own daughter's son.

JOSIAH COBLEY. Ninety-two and a bittock and me that poorly.

TIMOTHY. It's all right, George. You be quite within your rights a-calling of me dad.

GEORGE. No, 'e'll speak for me. . . . Calling of himself George Treuwick—I'll show' im. . . . Now, granddad. . . . You ain't silly, are you?

TIMOTHY. It's all right, George, lad. You're

my son George. I remembers your features. . . . This 'ere's Bill Hawke.

BILL. Aye, Corporal Bill Hawke and I got to beg your pardon. You see I be a-courting Dorcas, and I borrowed your name as it were for to get acquainted with your dad, 'im being kind of prejudiced again the army.

GEORGE. Bill Hawke—for two pins I'd . . .

BILL. Oh, that's your game, is it. In 'alf a mo' I'd . . .

DORCAS. Behave yourself, George. Shake his 'and, Bill. 'E's my lad and we be engaged.

BILL. So we be. And if ever you'd like to pass yourself off as Bill Hawke, you're welcome I'm sure.

GEORGE. Thank you kindly. I'll make a note on it. . . . Well, seeing you's to be my brother-in-law, you and me's got to be pals. Shake. (*They shake.*)

JOSIAH COBLEY. That old I be, that weak in me legs, and 'e pulled me out of my bed.

TIMOTHY (*indicating JOSIAH COBLEY*). 'E'd better go back to 'is bed, 'e 'ad.

GEORGE. Oh, I'll make 'im 'op it back again soon. 'E's a lot spryer than he makes to be.

(*GRANDDAD begins to cry. MARTHA comforts him.*)

MARTHA (*leading him*). Come and sit you down, granddad, and rest yourself. Us'll take care of you.

GEORGE. Dad, I've got a present for you 'ere. A bottle of whisky.

JOSIAH COBLEY. Eh? What did grandson Jarge say—whisky? 'Tis a many days since I 'ad a sup of whisky.

GEORGE. 'Ear that? (*Goes to get whisky.*)

TIMOTHY. 'E certain ought to go back to 'is bed.

JOSIAH COBLEY. I'd sooner stay and 'ave a sup of whisky. Where be you gotten it, Jarge? (*Gets up and hobbles after GEORGE.*)

GEORGE. In my kit-bag. . . . We'll drink some healths, dad.

TIMOTHY. And him bedridden these ten years.
'Tis wonders will never cease.

MARTHA. Aye. 'E be a humbug like the rest of you.

(Whiskey is handed round. To granddad as well.)

TIMOTHY. Thank 'ee. I'm glad you didn't die of the measles, George. You're a fine upstanding lad.

GEORGE. Measles be blowed. Takes more than that to kill a sailor. . . . Here's a health for you—Corporal Bill Hawke, his blushing bride and His Majesty's Army.

BILL. Thank 'ee kindly.

JOSIAH COBLEY. I feel merry already. Happen I'll not be going to my bed yet a while.

BILL. And here's another—George Treuwick and His Majesty's Navy.

GEORGE. And to 'ell with Germany.

CURTAIN.

Continued from second page of cover.

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